THE SOURCE

NEWSLETTER OF THE NHDES DRINKING WATER SOURCE PROTECTION PROGRAM FALL 1999

Funds Available for Water Protection Projects

Grant proposals for watershed and drinking water protection projects due November 15

The NH Department of Environmental Services is pleased to announce the availability of 1999/2000 Local Water Protection Grants for Watershed and Drinking Water Protection Projects. Over $350,000 worth of funding is available to identify and address nonpoint source pollution in order to protect watersheds and to develop and implement programs to protect sources of public drinking water.

Application packets are now available to apply for funding to support water protection projects. The proposal deadline is November 15, 1999. The application can be obtained (in both WordPerfect and pdf formats) at <www.des.state.nh.us/dwspp/swpp.htm> or by calling Johnna Furber at 271-7017. If you have questions regarding these grants, please contact Eric Williams, Nonpoint Source Coordinator, at 271-2358 or Sarah Pillsbury, Drinking Water Source Protection Coordinator, at 271-1168.

This marks the second year that DES's Nonpoint Source Protection Program and Drinking Water Source Protection Program have joined together to fund water protection projects. By combining two sources of funding, a wider range of projects is eligible to receive grant awards. Last year, 28 organizations received a total of $338,000 to protect water resources. The grant money can be used in all phases of watershed management and drinking water protection including organization building, watershed planning, delineation, assessment, and implementation. Local watershed management can protect rivers and streams, lakes and ponds, wetlands, groundwater, drinking water supplies, or any combination of these.

Drinking Water Protection Projects. These grant awards are for protection of active sources of public water supplies. Funds can be used to cover all aspects of source water protection: *delineation, assessment and implementation*. For example, grant money can be used to refine the existing delineation of the area around a water supply source where groundwater is likely to flow towards the well, conduct an inventory of all potential and known contamination sources within that defined area, or assess known and potential threats to the water quality and implement appropriate protection methods. Past projects in this category have included delineation of wellhead protection areas and critical watershed segments, inventorying potential contamination sources, formation of watershed protection alliances, development of local ordinances, performing land surveys as a precursor to land acquisitions, and controlling access to sources. Grantees have ranged from the state's largest cities to small apartment complexes and mobile home parks.

Nonpoint Source Protection Projects. These grant awards generally cover a much broader range of projects, including implementation of watershed and aquifer protection. These grants cover organization building for watershed protection, water resource protection planning, and implementation of water resource management plans including best management practices, education and outreach programs, and other pollution prevention activities.

Inside this Issue

Spotlight on... Sunapee

It takes more than one town to protect a watershed the size of Lake Sunapee's. The lake, which is the only source for the 1,500 customers of Sunapee Water Works, extends into three towns, and its watershed covers five towns. Fortunately, the Lake Sunapee Protective Association and the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission have been valuable allies in protecting the lake.

According to Sunapee Planning and Zoning Administrator Michael Marquise, the town's lake protection efforts have benefited from work done by both groups. For example, in 1994 the Regional Planning Commission determined that the amount of developed land in the watershed could triple under a full build-out scenario. A follow-up study relied on the Commission's work as well as a report by UNH's Freshwater Biology Group to project the impact of future development on water quality. While the town has focused on protecting the lake's shoreline through sewering and strict shoreland development restrictions, Marquise says attention is now being turned to tributaries and the rest of the watershed. The Association has been very effective in working with other towns, Marquise says, in large part because "educating people goes a lot farther than being heavy-handed in enforcement."

DES and USGS Studying Water Supply Rivers

DES is collaborating with the US Geological Sur-vey to conduct dye tracer studies in the state's twelve major rivers used for water supply. The project will determine the time of travel for contaminants spilled upstream of water supply intakes. The studies will identify critical areas upstream of water supply intakes to help DES conduct source water vulnerability assessments and to help water suppliers do emergency response planning.

For each river reach to be studied, USGS plans to conduct a dye tracer test during low flow conditions and another during higher flow. The flow tests are beginning this fall; water suppliers and municipalities will be notified before the tests are conducted. The project is funded with a portion of the federal set-aside allocated to NHDES under the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996.

Rivers to be Studied

Ammonoosuc	Lamprey
Androscoggin	Mascoma
Connecticut	Merrimack
Contoocook	Oyster
E. Branch Pemigewasset	Salmon Falls
Exeter	Sugar

The EPA Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water's webpage offers valuable information for consumers who want to understand and protect their drinking water and their health. The site contains basic information to such questions as:

- Where does drinking water come from?
- What contaminants may be found in drinking water?
- What are the effects of contaminants in drinking water?
- How can I help protect drinking water?

The site can be accessed at:
<www.epa.gov/safewater/dwhealth.html>

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Closer To Home

Information for well owners and public water system customers

Where Has All the Water Gone? What Can You Do About It?

At the end of June a drought warning was declared for the entire state, stressing the need for voluntary reductions in water use. Monthly average stream flows, groundwater and lake levels, and precipitation have been below normal for the majority of the summer. Although some areas of the state have received rain in recent weeks, the rain has not been enough to make up the deficit of the previous three months.

Whether your water comes from a water system or your own private well, a drought warning applies to you. Here are some ways you can help conserve water now and during the year.

1. Run dishwashers and clothes washers only with full loads.
2. Take short showers instead of baths.
3. Unless you have a low flow toilet (1.5 gallons or less), place a rock-filled plastic container (not bricks) in your toilet tank.
4. Turn off the water while brushing your teeth, lathering your hands, or shaving.
5. Install water-saving devices on faucets and shower heads.
6. Fix leaking toilets and faucets which can waste hundreds of gallons of water a day.
7. In the garden, use mulch to retain moisture.
8. Water your lawn in the early morning when evaporation is low. Set your mower blades at their highest setting to retain water.
9. Use a broom to sweep your driveway instead of rinsing it with a hose.
10. Keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator so you don't have to let the tap run every time you want a cold drink.
11. Peel and clean vegetables in a large bowl of water rather than under running water.

Although these steps may seem small, the demand for water created by household needs in New Hampshire is second only to power plant coolant water use. If every household cut back its consumption by 15 percent, we'd save about 11.2 million gallons of water each day. That's enough to supply another 16,000 homes! Water conservation isn't just for droughts, it's an essential, year-round habit for a better planet.

How Healthy is Your Home Heating Oil Tank?

Are you one of the nearly quarter of a million oil heat customers in New Hampshire that stores oil in a small above or below ground tank at your home? Did you know that weather, corrosion, poor installation or maintenance, and age can adversely affect the condition of a heating supply tank and can cause a spill at your home? NHDES has responded to over 700 such spills of #2 heating oil and kerosene in homes over the past 5 years. These spills can result in reduced quality of ground and surface waters, soil contamination, and indoor air quality concerns as well as expensive cleanup costs.

NHDES does maintain a fund to provide financial assistance to owners of storage tanks who incur cleanup costs not covered by private insurance. However, eligibility for utilization of this fund requires that the tank system be in compliance with National Fire Protection Association Standards. You can determine how your home heating oil tank measures up to these standards by using the "Self Inspection Checklist for Basement and Backyard Aboveground Home Heating Oil Tanks" (WMD-OIL-15). This fact sheet can be obtained on-line at <www.des.state.nh.us/oil-15.htm> or by calling 271-2975.

The average cost to clean up a spill or leak of a home heating oil tank is $15,000!

New Happenings in DES's Water Division

New groundwater and drinking water fact sheets

Four new or updated fact sheets are now available from the Drinking Water Source Protection Program.

New Hampshire Groundwater Conditions summarizes the importance of groundwater, its availability, quality, and status regarding contamination and protection, and outlines what more needs to be done. The information was compiled by DES for EPA's Groundwater Report to Congress.

Who Owns New Hampshire's Groundwater? This fact sheet addresses the right to use groundwater, natural and regulatory limits on withdrawals, and local authority to restrict groundwater use.

Comprehensive State Source Water and Groundwater Protection Program (CSGWPP) summarizes the first five years' progress of the CSGWPP (also known as the Groundwater and Drinking Water Strategy) and the current process of updating the strategy.

Best Management Practices for Fueling and Maintenance of Earthmoving and Excavation Equipment has been updated to include more explicit standards to contain spills in fueling areas. This is an important BMP for local land use boards who regulate gravel pits and other earthmoving operations such as construction sites.

The fact sheets are available on the Program's web site (see right) or by calling 271-2862.

Water Division reorganized

In June, DES announced the reorganization of its Water Division. One of the goals of this reorganization is to enable the improvement of existing operations and address long term trends, such as the need for effective and integrated watershed management.

The Drinking Water Source Protection Program remains within the Water Supply Engineering Bureau. However, we are also part of a new organizational unit known as the "Land Resource Management Program" which includes the Subsurface Systems Bureau, Wetlands Bureau, Shoreland Protection Program, and the Site Specific Program. It is hoped that grouping these bureaus and programs together will provide a better focus on initiatives to balance growth and environmental impacts and "one stop" regulation and permitting for projects with impacts on land and water resources.

Internet address change

The DES homepage now resides on its own in-house server, with a new web address. You can now find information about the Drinking Water Source Protection Program at <www.des.state.nh.us/dwspp/swpp.htm>

This change opens up new on-line possibilities, some of which include ftp services, site search capabilities, development of an agency intranet, and database search capabilities.

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